

Good afternoon. I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this conference. In reviewing the agenda, it is clear that you will be working together to exchange information regarding Institutional Controls with many experts and practitioners from across the country. I want to make sure everyone understands early on, I'm not one of them.

My introduction to Institutional Controls is from work I have been involved in with the State, Tribal and EPA Exchange Network and specifically with data standards work. Larry Zaragoza and a group of folks understood the importance of communicating information and the need for a common language when communicating information. These individuals undertook an effort to fill the void by developing a draft set of Data Standards for Institutional Controls. They brought those draft standards to the Environmental Data Standards Council for review, refining, and ultimately adoption. It was a fairly long process, but due primarily to the interest of Larry and others, today States, Tribes, Local Governments and EPA have Data Standards available to use when exchanging information regarding Institutional Controls. If you have not looked at the Institutional Controls Data Standard, they, as well as other standards that have been adopted, are on the Internet. Just search for EDSC, and you will get to the website.

So what are data standards? They are in simplest terms. They are tools for communication. Data Standards allow entities to communicate with each other particularly using technology and allow both to have a common understanding of what is being communicated. I have made available copies of the list of data standards that have been adopted as well as select pages from the Institutional Controls Data Standard to provide a flavor of its contents.

About a year ago, I was asked to be the State Co-Chair of the Exchange Network Leadership Council. The Exchange Network is a partnership of States,

Tribes and EPA developing and implementing tools to more readily exchange environmental information. The key focus to date has been to utilize the Exchange Network to exchange agreed upon information related to EPA's primary program's data systems.

At this time _____ states and _____ tribes are using the Exchange Network and a number of others in the process. These are exciting times as creative people identify and develop newer, better, faster ways to exchange environmental information. Better information results in better decisions.

On another front, states and local governments as recipients of grants and for EPA in their grant management activities, there has never been more emphasis on providing data to link environmental progress with strategic priorities. The key to progress in this area will be the ability to agree on measures and how to communicate these measures to accomplish the goal of matching the accomplishments with the targets. This is a great concept, but without great care in implementing this effort, states and local governments may be overwhelmed and EPA may be disappointed in the results.

I recently had the privilege of attending the Microsoft Government Leaders Forum. That Forum brought individuals from South America, Central America and North America together to interact on three primary topics, security, education and governance. I walked away from the Forum with a renewed understanding of the value of human interaction.

Whether it is exchanging environmental data, measuring the benefits derived from grants, dealing with educational issues, security issues, or understanding and implementing Institutional Controls, the key to success remains the human element. Leaders such as you talking and listening. Finding common ground and moving forward.

This conference has much to offer. It is clear a lot has been done to move Institutional Control activities forward. Take advantage of your time here. Learn from each other. Exchange ideas. Seek common ground.

Thank you for allowing me to participate in your forum. I look forward to learning from you.